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# "Saying" as Collective Practice: Quoting and Differential Address in the News

## **Disciplines**

Communication | Journalism Studies | Social and Behavioral Sciences

# 'Saying' as collective practice: Quoting and differential address in the news\*

BARBIE ZELIZER

## Abstract

*This paper discusses differential address in the news by examining how journalists employ quoting practices across media. Journalists use quotes for a number of reasons beyond speaker reference, which help them turn quoting practices, or journalistic 'saying', into collective practice. Three dimensions characterize the collective nature of quotes: First, on the level of speaker reference, quotes lend authority to unspecified collective sources behind the news. Second, beyond speaker reference, quotes lend authority to the collective of journalists who cite the words of others. Third, quotes create a collectivity of news audiences, by offering journalists a way of simultaneously connecting different audiences to preferred readings of news. This paper has implications for the study of other junctures linking the presentational practices of public discourse with the ideologies and authority they embody.*

Traces of quoting in discourse can be found in nearly every domain of social life. Quotes exist in literature, on supermarket shelves and magazine racks, in everyday speech. Quoting practices are the credit cards of contemporary public discourse: They lend credit to speakers who use them in their messages. Yet traditional work on quoting practices has regarded the quote primarily as a stylistic device (i.e., Booth, 1961), with speaker reference seen as its major aim. While such a perspective is helpful for examiners of narrative technique, it circumvents recognition of other functions which speakers using quotes may intentionally (or unintentionally) fulfill in public discourse. Other functions of quoting are particularly relevant for journalism, where speakers use quotes to legitimate their role in public discourse.

This article considers quoting practices among journalists, with an eye to exploring the functions of quoting beyond speaker reference. Journalists see quoting as a legitimate and valued vehicle for telling stories and making them intelligible for audiences. In an attempt to ascertain whether

different media settings promote different quoting practices, this paper explores how journalists use quotes across television, radio and print news-media.<sup>1</sup> Implicit here is a consideration of the collective nature of quotes: How is it constructed? Does it help journalists draw audiences to certain ideologically-preferred readings of news, and, if so, in what way? Most important, does this collective nature influence the workings of journalistic authority? Also at focus here is an exploration of the notion of differential address, by which journalists try to connect audiences with messages through different types of quoting practices. In this sense, quoting practices are seen as a smaller stage through which to understand the larger arena of journalistic behavior, and its relationship to society.

### **The tradition of quoting**

Quoting is a merger of statements made at two points in time: Webster's Unabridged Dictionary (1983 [1955]) defines quoting as 'repeating the words of another'. Quotations 'bring together at least two discourse events: That in which things were originally expressed ... by one subject ... and that in which they are cited in another' (Sternberg, 1982: 107). Scholars have regarded quotes as having one of three effects — retelling tellings, code-switching and lending authority:

1. *retelling tellings*. This is the most obvious effect of quoting, for it suggests the simple repetition of another's words. Speakers bring together one statement (from which a quote is taken) with another (into which it is embedded). In a Bakhtinian sense (1981), quotations are seen as introducing a *dialogic* character to what is being said. They cause speakers to interact with a discourse that is prior to their own moment of speech. Each quote is thus formed via reference to other cultural narratives.<sup>2</sup>

2. *code-switching*. Quotes can introduce code inconsistency, or code-switching (Gumperz, 1982; Irvine, 1974), into a message. Code-switching changes the message into which a quote is embedded, by deepening, altering, distancing or undercutting it. Often, code-switching indicates that the original message 'doesn't really count' (Irvine, 1979: 215). In this sense, quotes can help speakers to abdicate responsibility: 'What they say is that the represented may not be completely accurate, so be on guard' (Lakoff, 1982: 245). When accompanied by changes in voice quality, code-switching makes quoters into commentators:

The storyteller–interpreter does not merely quote or paraphrase the text but may even improve upon it, describe a scene which it does not describe, or answer a question which it does not answer (Tedlock, 1983: 211).



Mukarovsky (1971 [1942]: 98) calls this strategy the 'third party intrusion':

[An outside party (speaker) speaks through the mouth of the speaker.] The speaker can then take a certain evaluative position to the matter at hand and encourage the listener and/or addressee to take the same position.

Code-switching thus complicates the function of speakers who bring quotes into discourse.

3. *increasing the authority*, or legitimacy, of statements into which quotes are embedded. In repeating the words of another, speakers can enhance the legitimacy of their own statements. Mukarovsky (1971 [1942]) maintains that speakers use quotes to say things that they cannot say directly. Authority derives from their 'frozen structure' (Penfield, 1983), or the fact that their internal arrangements cannot be altered. Quotations can make certain texts authoritative by virtue of their association with experts, who create plausible contexts through which to convey messages. The words of experts 'allow past experience to speak through present experience with an "integrity" and a "detachment" — an "objectivity"' (Stewart, 1978: 122).

Each of these points about quoting practices suggests that in all cases they blur distinctions: Quotes bring together discourses of 'now' with discourses of 'before'; they blur distinctions between present and prior speakers, and present and prior authorities; they merge distinctions about the dialogue which functions as authority and the authority which functions as dialogue. Quotations thereby provide metaphorical resting-places for speakers, providing them with whatever spatial and temporal junctures they choose to bring into discourse. Thus, analysis of quotes can lend insight into the underlying logic of public messages.

### **Journalism and quoting**

For journalism studies, an analysis of this underlying logic has special relevance: Journalists consider 'quoting' an acceptable way of telling news-stories and a viable choice within a repertoire of available story-telling practices (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978; Fishman, 1980). Quotes herald back to the people who make them, and in news, these people are often eyewitnesses to events, experts in social problems or otherwise credible witnesses to news-stories.

Expectations held by journalists, however, that news-discourse will clarify events to audiences through the story-telling devices they use (i.e., Carey, 1986) are undermined by journalistic reliance on quotes. Rather

than clarify discourse, quoting practices blur its spatial and temporal parameters. News-quotes are generally anonymous (as in 'experts said') and uncentered (as in 'he said that she said that they said' [Glasgow University Media Group, 1980; Tuchman, 1978]). They are also recontextualized (taken from one utterance and put inside another). Nearly every journalistic textbook or news-writing manual addresses how best to 'recontextualize' quotations within news-stories.

Guidelines on this matter are precise. Reporters are advised to keep quotes brief and broken into separate sentences, distinguishing 'where the words of the person being quoted stop and the broadcaster's own words begin' (Bliss and Patterson, 1978: 35). Quotations should address 'particularly sensitive or controversial passages that must be identified specifically as coming from the speaker', but their incorporation should catch errors 'that often go unnoticed when someone is speaking but are embarrassing in print' (Miller, 1977: 149). Quotes are seen as adding liveliness to news-reports: 'Use his words to humanize your story' (Lewis, 1984: 53). One manual for print journalists regards quoting as a preferred practice for journalists, admonishing that 'editors want all the good quotes they can get' (Hohenberg, 1960: 102).

Quoting is also important for journalists, because it is one of the few presentational devices which directly reflects a central news-gathering routine — that of sourcing. Quoting publicly acknowledges that news emanates from a relationship between journalists and sources (Strentz, 1978; Sigal, 1973). Publicly acknowledging this relationship has become a given in news discourse. Forms of acknowledgement include 'on the record' attribution; attribution 'not for direct quotation'; attribution to spokesmen; and background information. The latter category can be further divided into degrees of status ('informed', 'official', 'reliable' or 'reputed sources'), geographical or sociographic location ('sources in government', 'in Congress' or elsewhere). 'Off the record' information rarely shows up in quoting behavior. The predictability and detailed nature of these different markers of acknowledgement suggest how central quoting practices have become for realizing journalistic work tasks. It is thus no surprise that journalists might invoke them as a way of lending authority and credibility to the stories they tell.

All of this suggests that journalists use the quote as frame in their construction of news-stories. Frame, in this sense, constitutes an articulation of appropriate boundaries, or an enunciation of what is (and is not) relevant to the event (Stewart, 1978). As mentioned earlier, articulation of these boundaries is primarily aligned with the referencing of speakers. Speaker reference is a primary way of making news-stories intelligible for audiences. News manuals repeatedly stress how a victim's emotional

account of a fire or a spokesman's terse overview of negotiations ensures that audiences understand the basic point of news-stories.

Who are the speakers which journalists reference? They are primarily anonymous collective bodies: Journalists tell audiences that 'experts say', not always that 'John Smith says'; they hold that 'officials indicated' rather than 'Captain Jones' did so. This commonly-accepted practice, by which the collective nature of news-quotes is initially established, is a given in news discourse regardless of medium. It constitutes the first dimension behind the collective nature of quotes: On the level of speaker reference, *journalists use quotes to lend authority to largely unspecified sources behind the news*. They do so in a way which unites these sources into collective, potentially unreachable and anonymous bodies.

But statements like '*The New York Times* says', 'the police indicate' or 'published reports suggest' are potentially problematic. For example, a news-item that begins 'proponents of abortion indicate ...' might prompt audiences into considering neither 'which proponents' nor the arbitrary collective of proponents implied in such a quote. Furthermore, this might prompt unilateral — and potentially uncritical — decodings of news by audiences. By referencing primarily anonymous collective bodies, journalists thereby relay information to audiences which can be seen as setting a stage that allows, even facilitates, potentially uncritical decodings of news.

However, quoting does not only serve audiences. It is also aligned with journalistic work norms, as they are delineated by the sociological literature (i.e., Fishman, 1980; Tuchman, 1978; Gans, 1979). Journalistic reliance on quoting practices evolved as a professional norm during the early 1900s, when journalists became less relayers of documents and more interpreters of news (Schudson, 1982). Today the need to verify facts has become a means for contemporary journalists to justify (and often create) their own authority: Turow (1984), for instance, maintains that reliance on accredited sources permits elites to help manage the news. By relying on quotes from those who are supposedly 'involved', journalists emphasize a posture of technical neutrality. Tuchman calls this the web of 'mutually self-validating facts' — the means by which journalists use quotations of other people's opinions in order to substitute expert (and sometimes less-than-expert) opinion for the 'facts' of real-life phenomena:

To flesh out any one supposed fact, one amasses a host of supposed facts that when taken together, present themselves as both individually and collectively self-validating. Together they constitute a web of facticity by establishing themselves as cross-referents to one another (Tuchman, 1978: 86).

In other words, reporters use quoting practices to create the illusion of a whole. Creating this whole reflects positively on the authority of those

journalist(s) who brought it together. Quoting is thus as much wrapped up in legitimating journalists as it is in the relay of information to audiences.

It is thus no surprise that journalists might use quotations as a way to reinforce different aspects of their own authority. Quotes shield journalists from having to express their own opinions (Tuchman, 1978). Using quotes protects journalists from their superiors, and lends 'factualness' to the stories that they tell (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). Quotes establish a news-text's precision, credibility and truthfulness (van Dijk, 1988). Quotes create an on-site presence for the news, by lessening the distance between events and reporters through quotees. Eradicating distance and constructing proximity thus enhances the news-story's credibility for audiences (Zelizer, in press; Degh and Vaszonyi, 1974; Graham, 1981).

Quotes can thus be seen as offering journalists a number of strategic interfaces, some of which play a part in the establishment and maintenance of their own authority for the news. Quotes create interfaces between journalists and the establishment. They also create interfaces between journalists and their audiences. Journalists might therefore be expected to use quotes in different ways, depending on the ends they have in mind.

This is not to imply that all journalists fully advocate all existing quoting practices. Rather, they negotiate, discuss and challenge many of them, alternately contesting the legitimacy of quoting anonymously, quoting collectively, or quoting according to prior agreements with sources. Discourse among journalists, for instance, over whether *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward should have posthumously quoted CIA-director William Casey in the manner he did (Woodward, 1987) suggests that many journalists are not comfortable with existing quoting practices. Nonetheless, because many quoting practices are wrapped up in giving journalists access to information and establishing their own authority, many journalists use them regardless of how they feel. This, then, constitutes a second dimension behind the collective nature of quotes: *Quotes lend authority to the collective of journalists who employ them.*

Yet a third dimension to the collective nature of quoting can best be exemplified by examining the range of quoting practices across media.

### **Quoting practices as nesting structure**

How different quoting practices work in conjunction with each other can best be seen as a *nesting structure*, borrowed from folklore:

Nesting, as quotation, as story within story, and discourse within discourse, may be seen as an exploration of the nature of textuality .... Nesting flaunts the interdependence of discourse; every text bears within itself an infinity of prior and potential texts as well as the idea that its own text can be repeated (Stewart, 1978: 124).

Nesting spatially portrays how different voices in news-stories are positioned at different distances from news-events. Speakers move 'in toward' or 'out from' the event, and infinity: 'He said that she said that they were told', for instance, starts from the most specific place and concludes at the most indefinite. Nesting shows how journalists employ quoting practices across media. Applied to these practices, a nesting structure might look as follows:<sup>3</sup>

Quoting practices as nesting structure:

Differential stratification of speakers

(Top to bottom = inside to outside = obvious to blurred)

Radio	TV	Press
Direct voice of quotee	Direct voice of quotee in intentioned setting <sup>4</sup>	Direct voice of quotee
Reporter in quotee's words	Direct voice of quotee	Direct voice of quotee in reporter's text
Reporter	Reporter in quotee's words	Direct voice of quotee out of text
Announcer	Reporter	Reporter in quotee's words
	Anchor	Reporter quoting other quoters (media)
		Reporter

Three parameters are suggested here:

1. Although the nesting structure is basically similar across media, quoting practices are nonetheless *stratified according to the strategic choices of journalists*. Where journalists position a quote directly influences the shape of the quote itself. Quotes extend from nearby (the direct

voice of the quotee) to distant (the anchorperson). Along the way, quotes are refracted through other voices. Where a quote is, then, reflects the strategic decisions of journalists to put it there.

2. Quoting practices differentially *blur speaker attribution* across media. Blurring works through the range, extent and origin of quotes. Blurring these attributes produces a number of unanswered questions for audiences: Who is the speaker and who the presenter? Who appears to be the speaker, and who hides the speaker role? Quoting conceals where in the nesting structure a given quote might be. With certain practices, attribution is obvious, as in direct voice. But with other practices, it is more difficult to identify where a quote begins and ends: For instance, anchorpersons or announcers often reword quotees' statements, abstracting what has already been said in another voice without saying they are doing so. This suggests the second dimension behind the collective nature of quotes, mentioned above. It is not just that 'experts', 'officials' or other collective bodies have lent their words to certain acts. But often their words become entangled with those of the journalists at their sides. Blurring speaker attribution thus allows quotes to lend authority not only to largely unspecified bodies of actors but also to the journalists who cite their words.

3. Quoting practices are stratified according to the *attributes of each medium*. The shape of quotes depends largely on the technical attributes of the medium through which they are presented: In television, for instance, quotes are stratified according to setting, with distinctions made between intentioned settings and non-intentioned settings. In the press, different printing formats — blocks, boxes or headlines — provide alternate ways for journalists to embed quotes. The following pages offer a closer glimpse of how a medium's technical limitations constrain and construct the circumstances by which quotes become part of news discourse.

### **The practices of quoting: Radio, television, the press**

*Radio:* Radio offers the most clear-cut nesting structure among the news-media under consideration. Radio news moves clearly from quotee's direct voice to reporter in quotee's words to reporter in own words to announcer (not necessarily in that order). This produces the quote's uncentered character. The clear progression through which quotes are used is communicated through a liberal employment of 'connecting words', as in 'according to a Reuters' dispatch ...'. It is also found in the communicative chain through which news stories tend to emerge:

Mayor Wilson Goode says City Inspector-General Leon Wigweiser says he was told the police began (this practice) in the early '70s when Frank Rizzo was in power.

Goffman (1981) calls these devices 'authorial disclaimers', in that announcers use them to attribute information to its original source.

Yet attribution can be blurred in many ways. Journalists can emphasize 'sayings' (rather than 'doings'):

A man with AIDS renewed his vows to his wife, this time with the blessing of the Catholic Church .... Cardinal John O'Connor says it's obvious that the couple must be very devoted to each other.

The turnout was disappointing, *but organizers* of Farm Save Day in North Carolina say the events were positive ...

Events can also be concealed by radio's circuitous thematic emphasis on 'sayings':

*I was told* by a Streets Department official, whose name I know, that in fact that back in 1972, there was an agreement reached, uh, with the Streets Department, uh, at that time ....

Radio 'sayings' can also be employed in an unevenly-balanced fashion. Listeners hear anomalies like 'no group has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping', or a number of 'sayings' to make one 'doing' (socially) explicit:

Police in Meyer, Arizona had to gun down a prep school student after he went on a shooting rampage on the campus. *Officials say* 17-year-old Gerald Husky of California was upset about getting caught drinking. *Police say* he realized he was going to face serious punishment. The *headmaster* of the exclusive 180-student school says Husky totally lost all rationality when he went on the shooting spree. An administrator and a teacher were wounded by his gunfire, before police were forced to shoot and kill Husky.

Many quotes reference anonymous and often collective bodies. This extends the imbalance between 'the sayers' and 'the doers'.

Quotes also affect radio news-talk in two more general ways: *The sign-off* — which reminds listeners that they are back on the level of reporter as speaker — and *the tag* ('This is KYW Newsradio') — which puts listeners back into the institutional setting of 'the telling'. Both devices show how even the general structure of radio news adopts the 'quotation' form, with listeners constantly reminded who is doing 'whose telling'.

A discussion of quoting on radio news would not be complete without mentioning intonation. Intonation helps signal a radio journalist's entry in and out of quotes. While radio discourse functions through the illusion of hyperfluent 'fresh-talk' (Goffman, 1981), spoken prose is broken when

text stops or is punctuated by a different perspective (such as a quote's introduction). This is called the 'text-locked voice':

In switching from ordinary text to a strip that is intended to be heard aloud as reading (a news quote, author-identified program notes, etc.) ... announcers can employ a voice suggesting that they themselves do not figure in any way as author or principal, merely as a voice machine (Goffman, 1981: 239).

Radio news-talk thus elicits a complicity from announcers, who are encouraged to break their fresh-talk image when quoting. In so doing, the 'text-locked voice' makes journalists sound as if they are reading. Using the 'text-locked voice' dislodges journalistic responsibility for the content of the quotes they use, while not losing the quote's authority. The appropriate use of quotes in radio news thus emerges in part when journalists invoke the appearance of textual competence.

*Television:* Television quoting practices are similar to those found in radio, in that they are anonymous ('it was widely believed'), uncentered ('he said that she said') and collective ('experts note'). But TV practices are also stratified in a way that highlights the medium's visualness: Via 'the visual', two simultaneous messages are relayed — that which is said and that which is seen. They do not, however, always communicate the same message.

Quotes of the past, for instance, are often revitalized by the visualness of television news. 'The visual' turns them into present-tense discourse: Ronald Reagan appears to present his Presidential address on Iran-contras a number of times following its original presentation. Playbacks are often unidentified, resembling original 'sayings' rather than quotations. This turns the statements they contain into present-tense discourse. Viewers who 'see' Reagan speaking can assume that his speech is contemporaneous to their own viewing. 'The visual' here makes past discourse appear as if it were present.<sup>5</sup>

'The visual' also appears to offset the collective nature of quotes in a number of ideologically-specific ways. Quotes from official groups in institutionalized settings are matched with individual close-ups: In one item, pictures provide a close-up of Jesse Helms standing on the Capitol steps, while the voice-over focuses on the latest doings of his Congressional committee. Similarly, an item about the deportation of accused Nazi criminal Karl Linnas evolves around an interview with his daughter, Anu. Seated in what appears to be a living room, with wall hangings, pillows and a large overstuffed divan, she is quoted as saying: 'He's innocent. We know. I don't have any doubts at all.' The domesticated setting *visually* structures audience decoding of her relationship with Linnas. It stresses Linnas's role as father rather than accused Nazi



criminal. Visual settings in which quotees are interviewed are thus used to ideologically anchor relationships of quotees to stories. Whether quotees are interviewed in intentioned settings or unintentioned settings largely influences not only how quotes are incorporated within news-stories. It also suggests to viewers how to decode these incorporations.

'The visual' also forces a preferred *integration of quotes within a news-text*:

Iowans gave the President qualified high marks for last night, but (switch of camera image from far shot of Vice-President George Bush to close-shot of David Yetsen, who is about to speak. Forced sentence continuation) he has not salvaged George Bush, for example.

Here, the camera jumps from point to point in space, even though the text does not jump with it. Relationships between quotees and quoters (or quotees and *other* quotees) are made explicit via this spatial disjunction.

'The visual' can also be used to create proximity between the event and reporter, by way of the quotee. *Pictures appear closer (to quotees) than voice-overs*, suggesting that visual settings are 'one step ahead' of the voices that speak them. This is exemplified in the following piece on a text-book ban in Alabama:

(Anchorman talks about quotee, as audience sees picture of Reporter Bill Whitaker) 'Today, as Bill Whitaker reports, that important ruling looks like ....' (Camera switches to schoolchildren in Mobile, Alabama, with pictureless voice of Whitaker) 'These Alabama schoolchildren lined up today to turn in their books ....' (Camera then matches up outside the schoolhouse with a voice, not Whitaker's, which is incorporated as a direct quote).

Three points are suggested here: 1) The fact that Whitaker was not in Mobile is obscured (and made less important) by the child's on-site presence as quotee. The child's presence enhances the story's credibility for audiences, who generally expect eyewitness accounts from the news; 2) the proximity between pictures and quotees is a *device which keeps journalists in observer roles*. It anchors journalists in spatial positions which correspond with normative beliefs about distance, objectivity and neutrality. Quoting thus gives journalists the distance from events which they need to uphold these normative beliefs; and 3) the positioning of quotees within intentioned settings emphasizes (and personifies) the ideological function of settings. As mentioned earlier, placing quotees in settings which uphold ideological relationships to stories helps determine viewer decoding of these stories. These points suggest that while television's visual quality provides newspeople with a way of stratifying quoting practices, it does so in a way that facilitates audience interpretations of these practices in ideologically-specific ways.

As with the 'text-locked' voice on radio, television incorporates a convention labelled here 'reading a quote': During his Presidential address, Ronald Reagan looks down at a (previously concealed) written text, in order to quote a line from the Tower Commission report: 'The board indeed does know that the President wants the truth to be told.' ABC Anchorman Peter Jennings looks down at a similar text when mentioning that Reagan had referred to 'erroneous statements and sketchy details'. ABC's Washington Correspondent Bob Zelnick looks down at a text before quoting from a memorandum that allegedly passed between North and Poindexter. Looking down at texts thus signifies quoting instances which signify 'reading a quote'. Doing so reflects a certain willingness among journalists to expose both their work routines as well as their own need to decode news: By reading texts on air, journalists admit to audiences their role as 'reader'. In so doing, they expose their own need to decode news. This distances them from the content of their quotes, by confirming that the quotes are someone else's words. Like the 'text-locked voice', this practice denotes textual competence on the part of journalists.

*The press:* Journalists using quotes in the press display the most stratified employment of quotes across media. Again, quotes are generally uncentered (as in 'she said that he said'), anonymous (as in 'it was widely reported') and collective (as in 'officials said'). These anonymous collective retellings can be extremely stratified:<sup>6</sup>

*Experts on the Iran-Iraq war said today that ... the lull (in the war) was probably temporary. The experts said they expected the Iranians to begin a new offensive to capture the city. According to Reuters, the Iranians announced Thursday night that they had ended their offensive and explained their goals .... An Iranian military statement was reported to have said that the recent offensive had 'dealt one of the severest blows on the Iraqi war machine' in the history of the war.*

Evident here is the employment of other quoters in quotee role (i.e., Reuters News Agency as quotee). Quoting practices also sometimes place journalists in illogical situations: The last line, for instance, references a 'statement (that) was reported to have said ...' (making it unclear whether the statement was made at all). The journalist writing the story, however, then quotes from the statement directly, in effect quoting from something which itself was never substantiated.

While print performance appears to lose many of the qualities brought out via the syntactic, phonological and lexical levels of quoting practices on radio and television, print journalists vary quotes using a broad range of acceptable presentational forms. To an extent, the press's 'visualness' together with the fact that texts can be appropriated at the reader's leisure

(and not at one given point in a broadcast) allows for the incorporation of quotes in the press by a range of devices.

To begin with, journalists can *differentially place direct voice within stories*. Direct voice can be found as its own text, as the reporter's text or out of text. Quotes can be brought directly *into the lead*, as in

A French prosecutor, rejecting a plea for severity by a lawyer representing the U.S., today asked the court to hand down a 'moderate' sentence, saying France could be held hostage if it made him a 'martyr',

or they can be textually incorporated *as interim titles*: An article titled [Reagan's request came as Baker was on verge of Presidential bid] is followed by an interim title that reads ['I have no regrets']; another headline [Regan replaced by President] is followed by ['I hereby resign']; still another heading [Reagan flustered, Tower reports] (in itself a quoting practice) is followed by ['He intends to make changes']. This *provides readers with a text that can be independently read on different levels of quoting practice*: Readers can read just the main headline and interim titles, and understand what the story is about. This may make quotes more authoritative (in that they stand out from the text) and less dialogic (in that they separate text from context).

This kind of differential stratification not only lets journalists manipulate the degree of admitted responsibility for their quotes' content, but it also allows them to make their points with varying degrees of complexity. While more data is needed before deciding what exactly introduces complexity into quoting, its existence nonetheless suggests a range of quoting practices within each medium. Disclosure of the Tower Commission Report on the Iran-contra affair is an example: When the story 'breaks', direct quotes are displayed in either the leads or headlines of most news-items. *The New York Times* offers one large section, entitled [The Documents], with a similar sub-section, the personal statements of 17 people, entitled [In their own words: How the Iran-contra affair took shape]. Likewise, a heading that reads [The Findings: In Muskie's words] focuses upon Muskie's appearance at a news conference. While statements from the news conference constitute the paper's front pages, excerpts from the report are included on its back pages. Moreover, a heading on the coverage reads [Opening statements], with sub-heads distributed according to [who said what] (and not 'what were the topics'). All of this suggests that the newspaper's disclosure of the Tower report (a *written* document) is organized around the Washington news conference and other meetings at which the story is made *orally* public. The basically written convention of *text publication is converted here into an act of retelling that is primarily oral*.

Disclosure as an oral act, as practiced by *The New York Times*, is not followed by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, however. The latter portrays the Commission report more as an *act of publication* than an oral act of retelling. Its front page reads [Highlights of the report], with actual report findings boxed-in on one corner. A long piece discusses the details behind the Commission's conclusion, with the paper saying that [Here is what the Tower Commission report said about specific administration officials and their failure of responsibility ...]. While oral quoting practices exist, they are contained within defined spatial parameters: A piece entitled [President is criticized for his failure to supervise his aides' Iran dealings] is followed by a sub-head *in a box* which reads

I think he was not aware of the things that were going on and the way the operation was structured and who was involved in it — Former Senator John Tower

The visible containment of Tower's words within a restricted spatial format denies them generalizability beyond the specific utterance in which they are made. Moreover, his name is affixed, like a signature, below his words, making him (and not the journalist) responsible for the quote's content. These two options — portraying disclosure as an oral act or as an act of publication — suggest how differentiated quoting practices can be. That one newspaper (*The New York Times*) portrays the act of disclosure as an oral act and another (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*) as an act of publication suggests that print journalists use quotes vis à vis a mix of what have traditionally been called oral and written modes of telling. This suggests different levels of complexity in quoting practices. Although more data is needed to establish the nature of this complexity in quoting, it is fair to assume that journalists might invoke different quoting practices as a way of addressing what they perceive to be different news audiences.

Like their colleagues in radio and television, print journalists have also developed conventions for detaching responsibility from a quote's content while holding onto its authority. This is generally accomplished by using *quotation marks*<sup>7</sup> as a signifying device. Quotation marks let journalists stratify a message by inserting an additional level of stratification in speaker voice. This level of stratification is wedged in-between the reporter's own voice and the direct voice of quotees. While direct quotes in full still remain the most authentic (and authoritative) telling, as in ['The President has made a great pick,' said Senator Bob Dole of Kansas], quotation marks nonetheless help journalists to dislodge responsibility for a quote's content in a variety of ways: In the statement, [Senator Jim Sasser, Democrat of Tennessee, said Mr. Baker will be the 'prime minister' in the Reagan administration], framing the words 'prime

minister' in quotation marks is a necessary choice for the journalist quoting Sasser. Thus, like 'reading a quote' on TV or the 'text-locked voice' on radio, 'quotation marks' in the press give journalists a way to incorporate quotes without taking responsibility for them. Again, this device invokes a sense of textual competence, suggesting that the appropriate use of quotes is linked by journalists with it.

### Differential address and quoting practices

The discussion of these pages has suggested that news quotes are generally more alike than different. The quoting practices outlined here allow journalists simultaneous techniques of address within any given news-item. These techniques are stratified according to the characteristics of the medium in which they are employed: In the press, journalists can incorporate quotes in headlines, in interim titles, in text; in television, quotes can be found in verbal messages or in visual settings; in radio, journalists embed quotes within a wide range of speaker voices.

Furthermore, employing quotes reflects different invocations of a quote's authority. Techniques in each medium allow journalists to detach responsibility from a quote's content while holding onto its authority: The 'text-locked voice' on radio, 'reading a quote' on TV and using 'quotation marks' in the press are examples. Significantly, these techniques signify the most obvious and identifiable of quoting practices — reading. By using them, journalists admit their role as readers, and suggest that their appropriate use of quotes is somehow connected with textual competence. That reading practice, and its invocation of textual competence, exists within a milieu that has generally neutralized other evidence of textuality is interesting, especially given a common acceptance of reading practice in public discourse. Journalists may therefore reserve reading practice for those circumstances in which they need to stress textually-derived dimensions of their own symbolic authority.

This essay has also explored the nature of news-quotes. News-quotes are generally *anonymous* and *uncentered*. When addressing speaker reference, journalists tend to blur the range, extent and origin of the quotes they use, perpetuating the illusion that their discourse — regardless of the medium in which it is staged — constitutes collective activity. This first dimension behind the collective nature of quotes establishes that *quotes lend authority to unspecified collective sources behind the news*.

In functions beyond speaker reference, journalists also enhance their own authority through quotes. This second dimension of quoting as collective practice suggests that *quotes lend authority to the collective of*

*journalists who use them in public discourse.* In a sense, the fact that collective legitimation could work in this fashion overturns existing journalistic notions about authority and the ideology of objectivity. Rather than uphold notions that quoting is *not saying*, because it relieves journalists of the need to defend the statements they quote, this discussion suggests instead that quoting practices among journalists constitute a specifically authoritative type of 'saying'. Quoting *is* saying, with all the burden of authoritative discourse that it implies. 'Sayings' are thereby turned by journalists into statements of collective practice which authorize and legitimate their own presence in discourse.

But news-quotes are not only anonymous and uncentered. They are also *recontextualized*, and this recontextualization is what makes journalists' differential employment of quotes ultimately succeed: Recontextualization offers journalists a third dimension through which to use quotes as collective practice. Journalists employ quoting practices to separate ideas from their context of utterance and reincorporate them within new ideologically-specific contexts, in accordance with the traits of the medium in which quotes are being used. The fact that each medium offers a range of different practices suggests that journalists *use quoting practices so as to address different publics*. Quotes — whether they are paraphrased, incorporated in text or presented in direct voice — give journalists a way to simultaneously address what they see as different audiences. In other words, different ways of speaking about events reflect differential constructs among journalists about what an audience is (or should be). This is the third dimension to the collective nature of quoting practices: Through quotes, *journalists create a collectivity of news audiences*. Where a news-story might be in a nesting structure is hidden precisely because its clarification might totter the illusion of collectivity which quotes imply. *'Saying' thereby ultimately becomes collective for audiences because journalists use differential address to connect them with the news.* 'Sayings' are turned by journalists into vehicles of collectivity, onto which sources, journalists and ultimately audiences can come aboard in different ways.

### **Conclusion: Collectivity, differential address and journalistic authority**

This article has discussed the collective nature of quotes through two related junctures. One is the notion of differential address. That different literate communities (Marvin, 1984) might 'read' the same text or 'hear' the same performance in different ways has been popularized by recent studies on readership (i.e., Morley, 1980; Radway, 1984). Bell (1977), for instance, discusses the presence of 'overhearers' in radio news — persons

who are lodged between the receivers intended by communicators and the audience estimated by surveys. Even ongoing research on violence and the media (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorelli, 1982) implies the existence of *difference* in decoding strategies of literate communities. But the notion that one news performance could contain within it different simultaneous modes of address, so as to ensure that different audiences attend to it at the same time in different ways, it surely a hegemonic device in news that has not been sufficiently studied.

This implies the second juncture of this article — that of journalistic authority. The promotion of collectivity as a way to consolidate journalistic authority suggests that journalists use quoting practices as devices of social control. Quotes are 'quotable' precisely because they allude to values which society regards as important and critical (Mukarovsky, 1971 [1942]), and journalists use quotes to make certain that 'what society regards as important or critical' becomes socially entrenched for audiences. However, the possibility that journalists change the complexity of their messages through quotes suggests that there are many techniques by which to connect audiences with preferred readings of news. Seen in this way, quoting becomes a practice which reflects back on the stature and authority of journalists themselves, and the way in which they exercise said authority in public discourse. Suggested here, therefore, is a closer consideration of other junctures linking the presentational practices of public discourse with the ideologies and authority they embody.

It is fitting that this article conclude with a quote. Foucault once said that 'people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does' (quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 187). Whether journalists have overstepped the credit line which quotes have traditionally allowed them in public discourse is as yet unclear. The capture of different audiences within preferred news readings suggests that quoting practices constitute only one device among many by which audiences are being enculturated into an institutional, ideologically-specific view of the world. Ultimately, however, closer examination may reveal that the collectivity which journalists promote through quotes may have as much to do with journalists (and journalistic authority) as with the collective strategies of audiences in decoding news.

## Notes

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1. News-texts were examined after data were collected ethnographically from all three media, from February to March, 1987. The media included *KYW News Radio* in Philadelphia; *CBS Evening News*, *ABC Evening News* and *Nightline*; and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The New York Times*. During this period, the Tower Commission Report on the Iran-contra Affair was published, lending an intriguing, if uneven, twist to the importance of quoting in the media.
2. Evidence suggests that 'quoting' has generated considerable social currency 'as a way of speaking'. Sperber (1975), for instance, maintains that all symbolic representations are 'in quotes', because they call upon prestructured and often tacit knowledge to be understood. Similarly, Barthes (1979) insists upon the basic plurality of all texts, in that the quotations from which they are constructed have already been 'read'. Foucault's notion of the quotation as anonymous — or authorless — discourse/performance (1979) stems from the same epistemological point.
3. The nesting structure reflects a cumulative picture of the items examined for this study. Each news item does not necessarily go through all the stages mentioned here: Levels are often skipped, as in a radio piece on Farm Save Day, which jumps directly from the voice of the announcer to the words of the quotee. This structure is, therefore, not intended as an authoritative portrayal of what happens in every instance of quoting practices, but only suggests what might be some of the relevant heuristic distinctions among practices.
4. This refers to whether or not interviewees are interviewed in what appears to be 'intentioned settings' (i.e., seated in an office) or 'unintentioned settings' (i.e., 'picked off' the street).
5. A similar time-space manipulation characterizes quoting practices on ABC's *Nightline*: Before Reagan's Presidential speech on Iran-contra, *Nightline* personnel had interviewed a number of key political figures as to what Reagan *should* say. The night of the speech, they juxtaposed 'sayings' which had been previously taped with the actual 'Presidential saying': They thus had people saying what he was going to say before he actually said it. This exposes the basically unmediated nature (and transparency) of quoting practices by journalists.
6. Brackets (instead of quotation marks) are used here to signify the beginning and end of statements taken from newspaper text. This is so as to maintain a distinction between what has been quoted already within the text (and thus constitutes 'quoting practice') and what is being quoted for explanatory purposes in this paper.
7. Quotation marks are also sometimes used in television, especially when journalists want to highlight a certain statement around which a story has been constructed. In this case, direct voice might be relayed *in text* across the bottom of the screen, or beside the picture of a quotee.

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